

**Media Coverage of Industrial Disputes
January and February 1979—**

A Cause For Concern



TUC
Publications

60p

TUC MEDIA WORKING GROUP

The General Council established a Media Working Group in October 1977. This arose out of a growing concern over media coverage of trade union affairs.

The purpose of the Group is to advise on matters relating to the reporting and presentation of the trade union Movement in the press and broadcasting.

Membership at present is: Mr WH Keys (Chairman), Mr FA Baker, Mr J Boyd, Mr GA Drain, Mr AM Evans, Mr J Morton, Mr A Sapper — General Council; Mr ND Willis (Deputy General Secretary); Mr K Ashton (NUJ) and Mr DA Hearn (ABS). Mr B Barber is Secretary to the Group.

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FOREWORD

This booklet reviews the way in which the media covered industrial disputes during the first two months of this year. It has been prepared by the TUC's Media Working Group with the aims of increasing awareness of the ways in which the media treat trade union issues, and of highlighting some of the criticisms made by trade unionists and others of the way in which their actions are portrayed by the press, radio and television.

We are not attempting to pass on to the media total responsibility, by asserting that all trade unionists behaved perfectly on every occasion and that the whole of the problem lay with the media.

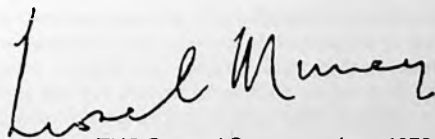
What we are making clear is that there are powerful criticisms to be made of the way trade unionists' actions are portrayed in the media. These did not just arise during January and February 1979, but they became more pronounced during this period because of the amount of coverage that was being given to disputes.

This booklet is by no means a comprehensive survey of the way the media reported trade union affairs during this period; more examples could obviously be quoted of reports, especially those produced by industrial correspondents who have specialist knowledge and experience of industrial relations, which were both accurate and fair.

Nevertheless, many people, particularly those involved in the disputes, have their own instances of unfair treatment. Some people working in the media may want to challenge, qualify, or possibly even support or sharpen the points made.

What it does is to begin an analysis of the criticisms of the media, and, hopefully, to promote constructive discussion, within the trade union Movement, within the media, and especially between the two.

One specific criticism made of trade unionists is that they do not make the best of the opportunities offered them to put across their case through the media. We accept that there is some truth in that view, and for that reason the TUC has produced a guide for trade union officers — *How to Handle the Media* — which is aimed at giving help on these points.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lionel Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Lionel" is written with a large, prominent "L" that loops around. The last name "Murray" is written in a similar cursive style.

TUC General Secretary, June 1979

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INTRODUCTION

Many trade unionists have long believed that the mass media is biased against them. They point to the large companies, often multinationals, which own most of the national press; to the tradition of the press barons using their newspapers to put over their own, usually right-wing, philosophies; to the establishment-orientated broadcasting companies and to the increasing trend for local newspapers to be taken over by one or two companies with interests in such diverse fields as North Sea oil, publishing and entertainment. Most of all they point to their personal experiences in dealing with the media.

It is a situation which most trade unionists would like to see changed. They would like to see the development of a fairer, more democratic, more accountable media. Yet it is a situation they accept as part of the world in which they live — as another obstacle to be overcome. But however bad things have been in the past there is always the possibility of them getting worse. And that is what happened in January and February 1979.

For two months, trade unions and trade unionists were subjected to an unending series of attacks and abuses which exceeded the experiences and expectations of even the most seasoned media watchers. Little attention was paid to the efforts made to draw up an effectively operated 'Code of Conduct' through which trade unionists voluntarily restricted the impact of their industrial action upon families, patients, and essential supplies and services. At times it seemed as though the country was at war with trade unionists, who, as it was all too rarely pointed out, form more than half the working population.

Attacks were no longer restricted to the editorial comment columns — though in some cases even editorials were removed from the sedate surroundings of pages 6 or 8 and plastered over page one beneath giant headlines. News stories, cartoons, photographs and even, in some cases, asides in the sports pages, all contained attacks on the trade union Movement. Nor were radio and television exempt from the chorus of anti-union propaganda, in which there was praise for the 'Dunkirk spirit' of those not on strike and a level of condemnation for those involved in disputes which virtually turned union names into terms of abuse.

But more serious than the attacks themselves was the effect they had on public opinion. By mid-February, polls showed an almost universal cry for 'reform' of trade unions. And what was meant by reform was clearly not strengthening. Many of the people calling for the power of unions to be curbed had little or no experience of the disputes taking place. Their sole source of information was the media.

It was against this background that the TUC's Media Working Group decided to produce this pamphlet analysing and offering an alternative view of the media coverage given to trade union affairs during this period.

Some sections of the media might regard themselves as watchdogs guarding the public interest, but as has so often been found it is necessary to watch the watchdogs.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY

Without an intelligent informed electorate the British system of participatory democracy becomes meaningless. For how are the public to choose between rival politicians if they do not know of their policies, their programme and their record? How are the public to judge whether candidate 'A's' record in office is superior to the alternative programme proposed by 'B' if they have not been informed of the actions of 'A' or the proposals of 'B'?

The media has an important, and often vital, role to play. For not only does it report politicians' actions, it also sets the agenda for action. If the media prefers to concentrate on the activities of trade unions rather than those of financial institutions then, inevitably, it is the activities of unions rather than the banks or pension funds which become the subject of public interest and therefore political comment. And if the reports of trade union activities virtually ignore the intensive efforts made by unions to control and contain the effects of industrial action on individuals then the impression is created that the unions don't care. If no mention is made of the failings of business institutions then politicians calling for their reform will be ignored — and so the politicians may stop making such calls. However, if the media is full of the activities of trade unions and the emphasis is on the 'need for reform' then politicians' plans in this respect will become news and they will be judged on this aspect of their programme.

To call attention to issues is the right and proper function of the media. Exercised responsibly, it is an essential ingredient of democracy. Yet when the media emphasises some issues and ignores others, then is the time for concern — for this is not assisting democracy but undermining it.

THE FACTS

To assess media coverage of industrial affairs it is necessary first to establish the facts which the media reports. To do this is no easy matter. In most circumstances the sole source of information is the media itself. There were, for instance, many allegations during this period that people would die as a result of the closure of casualty wards and action by ambulancemen. However, the only death which it is possible to relate directly to industrial action was that of a picket — Robert Watson, aged 37 — who died under the wheels of a lorry as it left an oil company's storage base at Aberdeen.

Deaths occur every day which could be avoided by greater expenditure on the emergency services. More casualty units, more ambulances, more kidney units and so on would undoubtedly save lives. Yet the failure to provide extra facilities is not as dramatic as a strike and so does not lead to the link with potential deaths.

One area in which information about this period is now available is that of days lost because of disputes. The Department of Employment *Gazette* publishes the official figures for days lost through strikes. This showed that in January 1,449,400 workers were involved in disputes with the total number of working days lost 2,585,000. In February the figures were 1,690,000 and 4,331,000 respectively. Both figures are the highest for many years. However, the number of stoppages, 227 and 224, was considerably fewer than the average monthly total of recent years — a fact which was little reported. The contributory factors have been identified by the Department of Employment.

For January this was the strike by 2,200 petrol tanker drivers who stopped work early in January and returned on varying days during the second week of the month. The DE estimate that 56,000 lorry drivers were involved in stoppages on varying dates from January 3 returning to work towards the end of the month. The number laid off as a result of this action is estimated, by the DE, at 235,000 — a peak which was reached just before the end of the month and subsequently declined rapidly. It is interesting to contrast these official figures with claims made by the CBI and others, and referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in mid-January, that 'millions of workers' would soon be laid off.

The DE say 20,500 railway workers were involved in four nationwide stoppages of one day each on January 16, 18, 23 and 25. In addition, there were unofficial stoppages in the Southern Region on January 3 and 10. About a million and a quarter public service workers in local authorities and health services took part in a national strike on January 22 and a number subsequently took part in further stoppages. Many of these were part-time workers and therefore not



Number of days lost through industrial disputes and number of stoppages, January 1977 to February 1979.

included in the total figures. Limited action such as work-to-rule and overtime bans are not included either. Other disputes mentioned by the DE are those involving 3,000 water and sewerage workers, 7,500 provincial journalists, 2,500 social workers and 4,000 workers in the North Sea oil industry.

For February the Department of Employment note the following factors: the continuation of industrial action by public service manual workers in local authorities and health services, which the DE note included full-scale stoppages in selected areas, as well as other industrial action — such as bans on overtime and working to rule which again are not covered by the statistics; the continuation by local authority social workers of their seven month stoppage; and the stoppage by 4,000 construction workers on North Sea oil rigs, which ended on February 26. The DE also mention stoppages of work at a Birmingham car plant from February 7–14 by 16,500 workers; and the resumption of work by 4,000 employees of a record deck manufacturer in East Kilbride following a seven week stoppage. Their figures also include the one day national stoppage called by the two largest Civil Service unions on February 23, in which 153,000 workers were involved, and the selective strikes by 1,400 staff in computer and Government offices which followed. Virtually all these disputes were concerned with pay.

While these figures are high, and are certainly in marked contrast to the low figures for the last four years, they are not unprecedented.

International

It is also interesting to note that Britain has not been alone in experiencing industrial troubles. America, France and Germany in particular all experienced strikes of one kind or another. In the United States a transport strike caused more severe shortages than those experienced in Britain. In West Germany, there was a prolonged stoppage by steel workers and in France there were even riots by workers in the steel producing regions. Whilst international statistics for this particular period are not yet available, in general in recent years Britain has been about the middle of the international league table for days lost through industrial disputes.

Sickness

It should also be pointed out that even in a period like this the number of days lost through injuries, accidents or sickness would still be far in excess of those lost through disputes. In normal periods recently the average trade unionist has lost about fourteen working days a year through illness or injury but only seven or eight hours a year through strikes.

Other indicators

One place in which the effects of these disputes were scarcely noticed was the City. The Financial Times Share Index closed at 470.9 on December 29 — the last day of trading before the New Year Holiday. It was 467.7 on January 31 and 481.8 on February 28. On the foreign exchange markets the pound was worth \$2.03 on December 29, \$1.99 on January 31 and \$2.02 on February 28. This relative stability contrasts with prices for sterling varying from \$1.80 to \$2.10 during 1978, and a range in the FT Index from 540 to less than 430 during the previous two years. No matter how the situation was portrayed in the media the City clearly believed that the economy was basically strong.

Public Opinion

But if the financial markets remained unaffected by reports of industrial chaos this was certainly not true of the opinion polls. A survey conducted by Gallup for the *Daily Telegraph* between January 17 and 23 and published on February 1 showed that 84 per cent of people questioned believed that trade unions were too powerful. This compared with 69 per cent in August 1978. Replies to the question "Generally speaking, and thinking of Britain as a whole, do you think that trade unions are a good thing or a bad thing?" were:

	Aug. 1978 %	Jan. 1979 %
Good Thing	57	44
Bad Thing	31	44
Don't Know	12	12

The public's rating of trade unions was, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, the lowest ever measured by Gallup in forty years of polling.

Even more startling were the findings of the MORI poll published in the *Daily Express* on February 7 and March 9. Replies to the question "How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?" were:

	Nov 1978 %	Feb 1979 %	Mar 1979 %
Tory	47	55	52
Labour	46	36	39
Liberal	5	6	7
Others	2	3	2

The *Daily Express* headlines when the February poll results were published was "Strikes backlash brings big swing to Tories", "Maggie leaps ahead", and there can be little doubt that the poll results reflect the effects of disputes, or at least the coverage of disputes, in the media.

THE ONE
WITH THE
BIG
NAMES

DAILY

EXPRESS

THE VOICE OF BRITAIN

No. 24,435

Tuesday February 6 1979

Weather: Mainly dry

TV Page 22

9p

Express MORI Poll exclusive: Strikes
backlash brings big swing to Tories

19% MAGGIE LEAPS AHEAD!

By Michael Evans

WITH the country beset by strikes an exclusive MORI opinion poll today shows the Tories in an astonishing 19 per cent lead over Labour.

And Prime Minister Mr James Callaghan for the first time sees his personal rating taking a dive, while support for Tory leader Mrs Margaret Thatcher rises.

The latest test of public opinion was conducted exclusively for the Daily Express by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) last week during strikes.

Over 1,000 voters were asked "How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?"

	Nov 1978	Pre 1978
Tories	41	55
Labour	40	36
Liberal	2	3
Other	1	6
Tory lead	1	19

This is the biggest gap since Labour came up polling in 1974. A General Election result on these lines would give the Tories a majority of 120 seats.

FED UP

Even trade unionists showed they were fed up. Question: "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?"

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Tory	4	95
Labour	45	55
Liberal	11	89
Trade	15	85
Unsat'd	55	45

The poll reveals that the most important issue facing Britain today for the voters is unemployment.

In previous MORI polls the issue of unemployment has been the top subject. The Tories are shown to have the more convincing picture on trade unions and industrial disputes, taking 39 per cent of the vote, com-

INSIDE TODAY: THE GREAT EXPRESS DOUBLE



ROCK My interview
with the mod



ROCK My meeting
with Beagle on

By February the shift in public opinion had become very noticeable.

How much people's opinions were influenced by direct experience of disputes or the effects of disputes and how much by the way they were reported in the media is very difficult to disentangle. There can be no doubt that some people in certain parts of the country suffered real hardship during this period. Many more suffered varying degrees of inconvenience, for example, by not having domestic rubbish collected or by not being able to take rail journeys on specific days. Particularly in services — whether lorries, hospitals or in local authorities — this presents a dilemma for trade unionists taking industrial action. In making a strike effective they inevitably affect the public, yet if they hold back they may run the risk of not making the impact necessary to achieve their aims.

Despite this, unions, officers and members, spent long hours in concentrating their action in ways that hit ordinary people least. This was seldom reported or highlighted. Had trade unionists acted in the way they were all too often portrayed in the media the dislocation would have been far greater than was the case in fact.

For most people the effects of the worst winter in many years would have caused many more problems than any disputes. Yet the media's continual concentration on disputes distorts the public's view of day to day trade union activities.

In these circumstances it is useful to examine the political beliefs of the media itself.

THE MEDIA

The Political Opinions of the National Press

A significant change has taken place in the political complexion of the national press in the last five years. At the time of the 1974 General Election just over 40 per cent of all national daily newspapers sold backed the Conservative Government. Now nearly 70 per cent carry a pro-Conservative anti-trade union editorial policy. This is largely due to the rise of the *Sun* as a mass circulation daily with a strong Tory, anti-union line. At the time of the 1970 election the *Sun* held just over 10 per cent of the market and in the tradition of the *Daily Herald*, from which it was born, backed Labour. By 1974 under Rupert Murdoch's control it had grown to 23 per cent of the market and was pressing for the establishment of an all party coalition. In the past five years it has risen to 28 per cent of the market — the largest selling daily — and is firmly committed to the Tory cause.

Of the other large circulation nationals only the *Daily Mirror* and *Guardian* can be expected to support anyone other than the Conservatives and neither would give wholehearted support to those policies adopted by the Trades Union Congress.

The balance is less favourable to the Conservatives on Sundays when just over 50 per cent of papers sold are likely to take a pro-Tory line. IPC's *Sunday Mirror* and *Sunday People*, with the *Observer*, are the exceptions to Tory domination.

The news and views put forward by the media do not emerge out of thin air. News is created by people working for organisations and in many ways there is no difference between those organisations and those which produce other products in daily use.

Newspapers and independent radio and television are produced by commercial concerns dependent on advertising for revenue. In the case of broadcasting such revenue is attracted by the size of the audience and in the case of newspapers this is supplemented by income from sales. The BBC is a public corporation with its own unique system of accountability, responsibilities and control.

Newspapers, in particular, are linked firmly to the rest of the commercial world. News International, which owns the *News of the World* and the *Sun*, is part of an Australian-based company which has interests in paper manufacture, engineering and transport as well as publishing. The Thomson Organisation, which owns a large number of regional papers as well as *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, is also involved in the holiday-travel business, publishing and North Sea

oil. Associated Newspapers, which owns the *Daily Mail*, includes restaurants and transport among its interests, and S Pearson and Son, which owns the *Financial Times* and a number of regional newspapers, also includes Doulton China and Madame Tussaud's among its many interests. Reed International, which publishes the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People* and many magazines, also produces paper and packaging on a scale which makes its publishing activities only a small part of its world wide business.

Newcomers to the field of newspaper publishing are Atlantic Richfield and Trafalgar House. The first of these took over the *Observer* in January 1977. The parent company is based in the United States and its main interests include petrochemicals, coal, aluminium and metal products. Trafalgar House took over the Express group, which now includes the *Daily Star* as well as the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, in 1977. Its other interests include construction, civil engineering, shipping and property development.

Of the remaining national papers, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Guardian* are the main products of their companies, though the *Guardian* is dependent for revenue on the more profitable *Manchester Evening News*. The *Morning Star* has, of course, close links with the Communist Party.

The Local Press

As has been noted much of the local and provincial press is owned by a small number of commercial organisations, which in themselves are part of much bigger conglomerates. For instance, the *Evening Chronicle*, Newcastle, is produced on the same presses as the Newcastle morning paper (*The Journal*) and the regional Sunday paper (*Sunday Sun*). These three are part of Thomson Regional Newspapers, which in turn is part of the Thomson Organisation which as indicated above also owns the *Times* and *Sunday Times* as well as Thomson Holidays and a vast number of other businesses both in this country and abroad.

In addition to Thomson Regional Newspapers, other groups are Northcliffe Newspapers, United Newspapers and Westminster Press.

While individual editors are usually allowed a large degree of freedom, much of the coverage of national industrial affairs is supplied through a London office and sometimes editorials are sent from London. Editors can decide how and indeed whether or not to use this material but in general it is used, and in general the provincial press, like national press, speaks with a voice which is less than sympathetic to the aims and ideals of trade unionism.

TUC Policy

The TUC identified the problems arising from the restricted ownership of the press in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press in 1975. The General Council recommended that a National Press Finance Corporation should be established whose main function would be to buy printing plant and lease it to newspaper publishers at commercial rates. It should also administer a newsprint subsidy designed to even out fluctuations in price of newsprint. The NPFC should have a supervisory board, one half of the members being elected directly from the trade unions concerned and the other half appointed by the Government. The General Council called for an extension of the freedom of the Press by making it

INTERNATIONAL THOMSON ORGANISATION

Operations in:

Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany,
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- SUNDAY
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| 51 Regional newspapers | 2 Forestry investments |
| 7 Sporting publications | 1 Airline |
| 9 Book publishers | 1 Package tour operator |
| 55 Periodicals | 1 Travel retailer |
| 2 Retail newsagents | 1 Employment agency |
| 2 Transport and distribution companies | 2 Engineering companies |
| 4 Newspaper printers | 1 Land and property company |
| 7 General printers | Holiday hotels |
| 2 Data publishers | Thomson Yellow Pages |
| 2 Information/data companies | |

S PEARSON & SON

*FINANCIAL
TIMES*

Includes:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Longman Books | 42 worldwide companies and representatives and
46 million books published during 1978 |
| Penguin Books | 45 million books published each year |
| Ladybird Books | 25 million childrens books published each year |
| Financial Times | Includes <i>Investors Chronicle</i> and 50% share in <i>The Economist</i> |
| Westminster Press | 68 newspapers, 31 periodicals, 16 annuals |
| Royal Doulton Tableware | Includes 59 china shops |
| Doulton Glass Industries | Glass and Industrial aluminium |
| Doulton Engineering | Electrical and mechanical engineering |
| Doulton Sanitaryware | (Minority interest only) |
| Doulton Australia | Sanitaryware, plastics, porcelain insulators |
| Lazard Brothers | Banking and finance |
| Ashland | Oil and petroleum (USA) |
| Camco | Gas and oil equipment manufacture (USA) |
| Blackwell | Agricultural farming (USA) |
| Madame Tussaud's | Waxworks, exhibition and museum (London and Amsterdam),
Planetarium, Laserium |
| Chessington Zoo | |
| Tolgus Tin | Cornish tin mine |
| Wookey Hole | Historic Somerset caves |
| Warwick Castle | |
| Chateau Latour | Vineyard and wine producer (France) |
| Millrayne Holdings | Investments |
| West Thurrock Estate | Industrial and agricultural land-leasing |

Two examples demonstrate that newspaper publishers are firmly linked to the rest of the commercial world.

representative of broader interests than at present and for increased participation by the trade union Movement in the running of newspapers through a supervisory board structure.

Though not included in the majority report of the Royal Commission the General Council's recommendations were taken up in the minority report signed by David Basnett and Geoffrey Goodman.

Broadcasting

There is an obligation on broadcasting organisations to provide impartial news coverage. For independent (commercial) local radio and television this takes the form of a requirement in the Independent Broadcasting Act which states that the Authority should ensure that "due impartiality is preserved on the part of the persons providing the programmes as respects matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy".

Using his powers under the BBC's Licence and Agreement the Minister responsible for broadcasting (at present the Home Secretary) has long required the BBC (TV, local and national radio) to refrain from expressing the opinions of the Corporation on current affairs or on matters of public policy. In addition, in 1964 Lord Normanbrook — then Chairman of the BBC — gave an undertaking to the Minister that the BBC would continue to 'treat controversial subjects with due impartiality'. That is still taken as the standard BBC stance on industrial coverage. Despite these assurances criticism still arises concerning questioning, the projection of news, and other areas where the broadcasting organisations may follow a lead given by newspapers.

No one studies the media more closely than journalists. Exclusive stories are rare and where they do occur they are often followed up by the rest of the media almost immediately. In this sort of atmosphere it is difficult for the broadcasting organisations to dissociate themselves from the press. At the very least they must consider broadcasting the prominent anti-union stories. And in circumstances where anti-union stories are the norm in the press then this tends to spill over into broadcasting and vice-versa. Given the short period of time available for the preparation and the presentation of news items it would be surprising if there was not a tendency to fall back on the conventional assumptions about the background to these items. This applies both to newspapers following radio and television stories as well as broadcasters following newspaper stories.

The BBC is financed by income received from the Home Office, derived from television broadcasting receiving licences which members of the public using television sets must pay. Independent television and radio is run by commercial companies appointed by the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The IBA say in selecting these companies they have preferred 'a diversified and multiple control of programme companies to a concentrated or single ownership'. However, to provide the necessary capital such companies have invariably had close links with business. Two news companies, which are non-profit making, are financed by other IBA companies. These are ITN for television, and IRN for radio.

Almost all television and radio companies include newspaper publishers among their owners and at one time the Thomson Organisation owned 80 per cent of the shares in Scottish Television, though this is now very much reduced. The Annan Committee on the Future of Broadcasting recommended that no newspaper should have more than ten per cent of the voting shares in any television company and for the total press interest in any company to be no more than 25 per cent. But they also said: "There is no evidence that press interests have ever attempted to influence the political or programming policy of the companies in which they hold shares".

International coverage

As well as our own newspapers and broadcasting organisations the international press also covers British industrial affairs in some detail. But for the most part a foreign newspaper will employ just one or two staff journalists in this country. Such correspondents cannot be expected to cover every story in depth and however hard they attempt to be fair it is all too easy for them to rely for much of their information on the domestic press with its heavy anti-union slant. As is noted later, on page 27, the Reading doctor who refused to treat a trade unionist received letters from around the world. This perhaps gives some indication of the type of story which the foreign correspondents pick up.

When the overseas press is so heavily dependent on the British press for its coverage of industrial relations matters, it is hardly surprising that the image of British trade unions abroad is unsatisfactory.

BIAS AND THE FORMS IT TAKES

This booklet does not attempt to give a comprehensive analysis of the coverage given by the media to industrial disputes during the first two months of 1979. Such a task would be extremely demanding and time consuming. For instance, the National Union of Public Employees alone has received over 10,000 cuttings from the provincial press during this period. These vary from double page features to single paragraph news stories, from editorials to readers letters and are taken from the whole provincial press from small circulation local weekly newspapers to major regional mornings. Coverage in the national press and on radio and television was just as detailed.

What has been done here is to take a number of 'themes' and examine coverage on the basis of these. These items are those which have emerged from previous studies of the media, for instance by the Glasgow Media Group for the book *Bad News* and by Professor McQuail for the *Royal Commission on the Press*. In addition, a number of other points for examination emerged during this study which have been amplified.

Sources of evidence have been the national newspapers retained in the TUC library, cuttings supplied by the Transport and General Workers' Union and provincial newspaper cuttings collected by agencies for the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, the National Union of Public Employees and the Confederation of Health Service Employees. In addition, the Confederation of Health Service Employees has obtained, from an agency, transcripts of certain television and radio broadcasts. The TUC and National Union of Public Employees have also video-recorded certain items. Because of the availability of research material the emphasis here is more on the printed word than the spoken. This however is in no way intended to indicate that the broadcasting media is not open to criticism. Their massive audiences and stated aims of impartiality make bias in radio and television all the more serious.

The themes to emerge from this study are listed below.

Media Coverage of Industrial Affairs Concentrates on Strikes

This point is to a large extent self evident. We grow accustomed to the fact that strikes are news, but on the positive side export orders won, production targets exceeded, increased efficiency are not news, nor indeed are losses due to management failure, deaths due to lack of adequate safety precautions, accidents at work and so on. Yet examined impartially there is no 'reason' why one aspect of industrial affairs should be news and another not. To take a specific example — contrast the scant coverage given to the Prime Minister's speech on electronics at the TUC Industrial Strategy Conference on January 23, which was mentioned briefly on the inside pages of the *Financial Times* and *Guardian* and given a little

coverage on lunchtime television, with the coverage given to some aspects of disputes taking place at the same time.

Some Industries Receive More Coverage Than Others — Some Jobs Receive More Sympathetic Coverage Than Others

Previous studies comparing days lost figures with media coverage have noted that media attention tends to concentrate on the motor industry, the public sector and transport. It is significant that in the period under consideration there were disputes in all these sectors.

Also contrast this coverage with that given to other disputes. The provincial journalists and North Sea oil disputes received very little coverage compared with the other disputes taking place at the same time.

Similarly, some occupations lend themselves to more sympathetic coverage than others. When nurses came to the fore there were a large number of news items examining in detail their pay, their work and living conditions. The BBC TV *Nationwide* programme did one such item, the *Daily Express* and *Daily Star* both gave sympathetic coverage to the nurses and the *Daily Record* in Scotland on March 9 devoted two pages to an examination of nurses' conditions.

There were relatively few examples of such detailed examination of other workers — an ITN *News at Ten* item on ambulance drivers being an exception. The most others could expect was a tag such as 'dirty jobs' workers, an average pay figure and a percentage claim, which in journalistic terms is far less likely to arouse sympathy than a 'human interest' story showing an individual worker, how much he or she takes home and how they spend their money.

The general lack of sympathy shown towards a group taking industrial action was admitted by Brian Redhead, who in introducing an item, which itself was sympathetic towards the problems of teachers, on March 5 in the BBC Radio 4 *Today* Programme said: "Before the teachers begin to press their wage claim, and no one has a kind word for them, let us this morning remember that it cannot always be much fun coping with a class of hefty teenagers."

Mixture of Comment and Fact

Traditionally, newspapers have claimed that they restrict comment to the 'opinion' or editorial comment columns and that news items are purely factual. This has probably never been the case. Certainly at the moment newspapers' views come across very clearly in their news stories. The following examples illustrate this case:

National Newspapers

Daily Mail

Headlines

DAILY EXPRESS

Headline

Feb 1 1979: "They won't even let us bury our dead"

Jan 25 1979: "You name it they'll stop it"

Feb 2 1979: "Target for today — sick children"

Jan 26 1979: "What right have they got to play God with my life?"

THE Sun

Lead Stories

The Daily Telegraph

Two small items — headlined

DAILY Mirror

Lead Items

FINANCIAL TIMES

Lead Story

THE GUARDIAN

Headline

Lead story

Morning Star

Lead Story

Headline

Provincial Papers

Daily Record

(Glasgow)

Feb 1 1979: Angry mums rolled up their sleeves and went into action yesterday against hospital strikers threatening the safety of their sick children."

Jan 23 1979: "Premier Jim Callaghan faced the fight of his life last night as strike torn Britain tottered to the edge of the abyss."

Jan 19 1979: "Picket dies under lorry wheels"; and

"... picket gang sought — two drivers threatened."

The cautious treatment of the first item contrasts strongly with the use of terms of condemnation in the second.

Feb 8 1979: "A suicide strike by 18,000 Leyland workers"

Jan 18 1979: "Britain is being held to ransom as industrial chaos grips the country."

Jan 16 1979: "A walkout by the 20,000 workers at BL Cars Longbridge plant pitched the state owned company into yet another crisis."

Jan 16 1979: "Cave-in ahead on haulage strikers claim"

Feb 12 1979: "In what looks suspiciously like a surge of graveyard optimism the Government seemed to be recovering just a trace of its badly battered self confidence."

Jan 17 1979: "Premier Callaghan last night launched an outrageous attack on the lorry drivers and on the whole trade union Movement."

Feb 8 1979: "Conned workers walk right out"

Jan 31 1979: "Public Service workers look set to pile on the agony today"



(Glasgow)

GLASGOW HERALD

**The
Northern Echo**

**YORKSHIRE
POST**

The Star

(Sheffield)

**Manchester
Evening News**

**DOLTON
Evening News**

**Lancashire
Evening Post**

EVENING POST

(Nottingham)

OBSERVER

(South Bucks)

EVENING POST

(Bristol)

Jan 31 1979: "Unions set to tighten the screw"

Jan 20 1979: "Scotland is bracing itself over the weekend for Black Monday when..."

Jan 29 1979: "More hardship is on the cards from today as hospital and council workers threaten the big squeeze if they don't get their way over pay."

Jan 23 1979: "Lives at risk as strikers show no mercy"

Jan 23 1979: "Sheffield tonight is a city of complete industrial chaos as more bodyblows from the unions pound home."

Feb 19 1979: "Carry on striking call to bin men"

Jan 31 1979: "Town Hall workers have vowed to step up disruptive action."

Jan 30 1979: "Hospital workers tighten noose"

Jan 17 1979: "Life in Strikers' hands"

Feb 2 1979: "Next week the teeth of union power will sink deeper and entire wards will close."

Feb 2 1979: "Avon's 2,000 guardian angel nurses today came to the rescue of patients hard hit by the intensifying campaign of disruption by hospital ancillary workers."

The reader needs to go no further than these snippets to discover the attitude of the newspapers concerned to the disputes to which they refer.

Similar mixtures of fact and comment also appear in radio and television coverage. For instance:

BBC1 *Nine O'Clock News*

Jan 31 1979: "Twenty school pupils helping out at a West Country hospital were sent home at a union's request."

BBC Radio 4 "*Today*"
Programme

Jan 19 1979: "Well-cherished the weekend that lies ahead because on Monday we're due for more industrial action. One-and-a-half million public service workers will be staging a day of action, a euphemism for a one day strike."

News Selection

Apart from the way in which particular stories are treated the media demonstrates its prejudices in the prominence it gives to different items. For instance, the *Morning Star* on January 19 made its main story the death of picket Robert Watson. The *Daily Telegraph* gave the item just two paragraphs.

However, some stories received remarkably similar coverage. For instance, on January 25 most papers carried the story of a Birmingham hospital where a doctor had decided to send home patients suffering from cancer. The need for such action was questioned by the shop steward who said that his members were providing emergency cover and that they regarded cancer cases as emergencies. The *Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Express* and *Financial Times* all carried this story giving greatest prominence to the doctor's remarks — several made it the main story of the day. All but the *Financial Times* also carried the shop steward's side disputing the doctor's action but in every case this was towards the end of the story.

The prominence or lack of prominence to give to different versions of the same facts is one of the problems which face journalists covering controversial issues. In this period it was almost invariably the version least favourable to the trade union case which received most prominence. For instance:

Doncaster Evening Post — Feb 12 1979 — Headline — "Strike targets children and old folk". The story itself quoted a NUPE official as saying that they would give a week's notice of strike action so that alternative arrangements could be made for residents of homes and that the aim was to cause havoc to the local authority but not to cause distress for the public.

South Wales Evening Post — Feb 27 1979 — this paper carried a story about a woman who had entered a cemetery by a side entrance but when she attempted to leave she found the main gate picketed by men who refused to let her out. In the third paragraph the phrase was used "Union pickets on duty stopped her". But in the tenth to fourteenth paragraphs union officials were quoted as denying that a strike was taking place at the time and stating that whoever stopped the woman was "entirely wrong".

A further example of how news selection works comes from the *Daily Mail* of January 29, which reported that a woman who had waited two years for an

operation could not go into hospital because of the dispute. Her story was not news on all the other days when her admission had been delayed because of inadequate resources in the Health Service — something caused by cuts in public expenditure, which the *Daily Mail* champions — but it became news when industrial action increased the delay.

No Ifs or Buts ... How the Hypothetical Becomes News

People often make hypothetical statements. If pressed someone will admit that if such and such happens then some other consequences will follow. Quite often the conditions are not fulfilled and the dire consequences do not follow. However, the predictions are always news.

A prime example of the way the prediction becomes news was the spate of stories about threatened lay offs as a result of the road haulage dispute. These include the following items:

THE GUARDIAN

Jan 11 1979: "Lorry drivers' strike will bring Britain to a halt within ten days and hundreds of thousands of workers are likely to be laid off before that, Sir John Methven, Director-General of the CBI, said yesterday."

FINANCIAL TIMES

Jan 11 1979: "Imperial Chemical Industries, which employs 90,000 people in the UK will shut all its operations within ten days if the private haulage lorry drivers' strike is made official today and extends through next week."

The Daily Telegraph

Headlines

Jan 11 1979: "2 million face lay off — Methven warning"

Jan 18 1979: "Shops will soon run out"

Jan 12 1979: "Food stocks will run out — Grocers may close"

Jan 13 1979: "500,000 laid off"

THE Sun

Headlines

Jan 15 1979: "3 million face the dole queue"

Jan 12 1979: "Famine threat — supermarket shelves could be empty in ten days"

Jan 8 1979: "3 million engineering workers face lay offs"

DAILY Mirror

Jan 12 1979: "Things will get worse. Food will rapidly disappear from supermarket shelves and millions of workers will be in danger of losing their jobs — Healey prediction".

Such predictions contrast starkly with the reality as shown in the official figures from the Department of Employment quoted earlier. Yet there were few

articles explaining why these predictions failed to become reality and no inquisitive journalist returned to ICI, Sir John Methven, Denis Healey and the rest to ask them to account for the inaccuracy of their predictions.

Causes and Effects

Previous analyses of media coverage of industrial affairs have noted that the media prefers to concentrate on the effects of disputes rather than the causes. The solution to problems is also given far less prominence than the creation or threat of problems. For instance, after several weeks of giving major prominence to the effects of the series of one day rail disputes, when these were called off the news rated more restrained treatment. The *Daily Express* carried it as a single column story on their front page as did the *Financial Times*. The *Daily Mirror* carried the story on page two and the *Guardian* on the back page. Similarly the end of the lorry drivers strike received much less coverage than the calling of the dispute and, as has been noted above, the gloomy predictions of disaster, famine and mass unemployment which accompanied it.

Many stories during this period completely ignored the causes of disputes, concentrating solely on the effects. Where wage claims were mentioned this was often in terms of percentage increases which, as most journalists recognise, people find it very difficult to relate to their own wages or their standard of living. For instance, the *Daily Mail* story of February 1, headlined "They won't even let us bury our dead", mentioned that the men on strike were seeking a 46 per cent rise but no mention of how much they earned now or how much they would earn as a result of the 46 per cent rise.

There have been exceptions. ITN *News at Ten* on February 9 analysed in detail the claims, earnings and state of negotiations in the various public service disputes. Several papers, including the *Financial Times*, *Morning Star* and, in the provincial press, *Wolverhampton Express and Star* have presented tables showing actual earnings and claims. However, even these are abstract and fail to convey the fact that the strikers are as much members of the public as anyone else with their own financial problems, families and the rest.

It has already been noted that stories about individuals relating the terms of workers' claims to that of their actual work and earnings were prominent only in the case of nurses. However, exception must be made of a few instances, such as an article in the *Daily Mirror* by John Pilger on February 14 in which he talked to a number of workers involved in the public services disputes, and on at least two occasions the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme spoke to the families of strikers about their finances.

Caught Between Extreme Views

News is about the unusual. Moderate views, therefore, have a tendency to be less 'newsworthy' than more extreme ones. On the one side therefore, the one or two shop stewards who were drawn into saying publicly that "if people must suffer so be it" received much more publicity than the majority who expressed regret and sorrow at being forced into the position of taking industrial action. Threats of violence on picket lines were widely reported yet little, if any, evidence emerged to back up these claims.

The Reading doctor who refused to treat a trade union member received a lot of publicity. An article in the *Reading Chronicle* of February 9 reported that he had received 700 letters as a result of the earlier stories about him which had appeared in the media. These included ones from Australia, Switzerland, Germany, Cyprus and Indonesia — an indication that it is not just the British media which chose to highlight the idiocyncrasy of this particular individual who, brilliant as he may be in his own field, seemed remarkably ignorant of the conduct of industrial relations.

Effects of Coverage of Disputes

The clearest example of the effects of media coverage are the public opinion polls quoted earlier, which showed a major change in public attitudes to trade unions and the Government during this period.

More specifically, stories about panic buying and potential shortages in shops in early and mid January were certainly themselves responsible for panic buying and so for shortages. In this the media must share the blame with those organisations such as the Food Manufacturers Federation, Tesco and the CBI who were making these predictions.

The Creation of Myths

The story of the council employed electrician paid £738 in a week was first reported in the *Sunday Mirror* on January 28. It eventually appeared that this included several weeks' back pay for being available on 24-hour-a-day call-out during a time of severe weather. However, the figure of £738 was widely quoted and used in cartoons at a time when little attention was being paid to the very low wages of many council workers.

Media's Response to Criticism

Several attempts have been made in the media itself to examine coverage of industrial disputes during this period. Many have been couched in very general terms. However, one which attempted to analyse one story in great detail appeared in the *New Statesman* on February 2. This disputed the facts of a story carried by the *Daily Mail* (in common with most other national newspapers) of a lorry driver whom it was alleged had been dragged from his cab and beaten up with wooden clubs by "four mobile motorway pickets". On February 6 the *Daily Mail* responded with a long article in turn attacking the *New Statesman* and attempting to substantiate their own story with signed statements. The *New Statesman* in turn replied with a further article of its own.

What happens when a union takes up a specific complaint with a newspaper is best seen from the case of the Transport and General Workers' Union and the *News of the World*. On January 21 the *News of the World* published a long article by Sir Leonard Neal, Chairman of the Commission on Industrial Relations from 1970 to 1974, highly critical of the present methods of conducting industrial relations and suggesting a number of changes, most of which would not be welcomed by the trade union Movement. However, what concerned the TGWU was that directly under the headline — "How to get us out of this mess" was a photograph of Mr Moss Evans being carried shoulder high by a group of men. The caption read "Moss Evans, cheered and chaired by strike pickets". Clearly the implication was that Mr Evans and the people in the photograph were

UNLESS we change the rules of the game we will go through the current traumatic experience year after year after year—until we collapse.

Striking or threatening to strike has become the accepted way of squeezing more money out of employers.

We have demonstrated to the work force that they merely have to hang on to make strikes profitable in the short term.

The law itself, in the last four years, has been manipulated by the present government for the aid of people who are willing to exercise their industrial powers.

What, then, must be done to get Britain out of the mess?

First we must repeal parts of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act and parts of the Employment Protection Act to remedy the imbalance of power between organized labour and employers, and elected governments. We must:

● **MAKE** agreements between employers and trade unions enforceable in the courts.

● **MAKE** it possible to bring industrial action pickets or their unions where secondary boycotts are under-
taken.

● **MAKE** short-term mutual security benefits for strikers taxable at the standard rate.

Secondly, when parties to a dispute reach the point beyond which they cannot agree there must be recourse to third-party arbitration.

It is nonsense beyond belief that collective bargaining should be administered in such a way as to prevent the employment of workers by the companies for which the work and the life and welfare of society.

Arbitration has to be a compromise. It has to be



● Sir Leonard Neal, Chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission, is seen here with a group of people, including a woman in a hat and a man in a suit, in a formal setting.

HOW TO GET US OUT OF THIS MESS



MOSS EVANS, cheered and cheered by strike pickets.

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responsible for the mess — a point not made in the article, which did not mention Mr Evans or the men in the photograph. In a letter to the Editor of the *News of the World* the TGWU wrote:

"Whilst it would be possible to disagree with many of the points he (Sir Leonard Neal) has made, the purpose of this letter is not to object to the article but to draw your attention to the gross distortion of the caption 'Moss Evans, cheered and chaired by strike pickets' under the photograph. This picture was taken after Mr. Evans had been reporting on current negotiations to Ford Workers at Basildon, Essex. This meeting took place in 1971. Can you explain, therefore, why the words 'strike pickets' were used under a photograph some 8 years old?

"We feel that this situation ought to be corrected because it simply does not represent responsible or truthful journalism."

Mr Bernard Shrimmsley, editor of the *News of the World* replied:

"I do not dispute your assertion that the picture was taken in 1971. It was, in fact, taken on March 28 that year, when Mr Evans was chaired by striking Ford workers.

"The picture was used by us for its symbolic value. I cannot see that it would have made any significant difference if we had said 'Moss Evans cheered and chaired by strikers in 1971' rather than 'Moss Evans cheered and chaired by strike pickets'. It is the same Moss Evans and I doubt that his attitude to strikes and picketing has altered between 1971 and 1979.

"If Mr Evans himself would like us to clarify the caption, I would readily do so. But how it will change the picture or the message, I really fail to see."

The TGWU declined to take up Mr Shrimmsley's offer of a limited apology on the grounds that the *News of the World* was only seeking to protract the matter for the sake of making further comment. And in many ways Mr Shrimmsley is right. The correction would not change the picture or the message which the *News of the World* was attempting to put across to its 13 million readers. The damage had been done by the juxtaposition of the picture, the caption, the headline and the article.

These two instances — the *New Statesman* and the *Daily Mail* and the Transport and General Workers' Union and the *News of the World* — demonstrate that while the media is all too ready to castigate others it remains extremely sensitive to criticism of itself.

Editorials

The vitriol of editorials scarcely needs illustration. In these columns newspapers need not even make the pretence of fairness. Facts can be ignored and arguments used which defy reason. There is no need for a newspaper to advocate a consistent thorough policy. Attack and denunciation will suffice.

The same applies to signed columns where often some of the most highly paid writers on a paper are given the opportunity to air views with a prominence denied to those who have stood for election and gained the support of their colleagues either in the political process or through their trade unions. And this is not restricted to the national press. *Newcastle Journal* columnist Harry Thompson was moved to write: "David Basnett one of the main architects of our misery talks 'responsibly' ... In more nervous countries people would spit at Mr Basnett."

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Whilst radio and television do not have columnists or editorials many of the points made above can equally apply to broadcasting — there is the mixture of fact and comment, the concentration on strikes, the emphasis on certain industries and jobs, the selection of news and the preference for effects rather than causes or solutions. In addition, the techniques of broadcasting bring additional factors to bear.

Bias in Questioning

The interview is one of the main tools of radio and television news coverage. The style of radio and television interviews is invariably to get answers to questions rather than to give interviewees the opportunity to present their case. As with the rest of the media, interviews, therefore, tend to concentrate on the effects of disputes. The people being interviewed frequently find they are forced to defend themselves from attacks on the effects of their action rather than being allowed to explain their case. For instance:

BBC1 Nationwide — Jan 16 1979: John Stapleton questioning union official — "One understands the basis of your claim but isn't the strike by ambulancemen potentially one of the most disastrous things that could happen to society?"

BBC Radio 4 The World Tonight — Feb 15 1979: Anthony Howard in an interview with Mr Albert Spanswick, General Secretary of the Confederation of Health Service Employees — "Wouldn't it look incongruous if ... these very troublesome and to a lot of people extremely worrying strikes drag on?"

BBC Radio Newcastle — Feb 6 1979: An interview with regional official of COHSE — "How far is your action today coloured by your sense of loyalty to the young, the very young and the yet unborn and how far is it being coloured by public opinion which is after all very much against you?"

BBC Radio Birmingham — Feb 5 1979: An interview with regional secretary of COHSE — "What if somebody did die, would we be able to sue COHSE?"

BBC2 News — Jan 19 1979: In an interview with a union representative three questions were asked — "How do you justify putting lives at risk?"; "If somebody dies will it be on your conscience?"; "Is that more money worth a life?"

Thames at Six — Jan 19 1979: Question to union official — "Are you seriously saying that dedicated men are going to leave other people to

die?" followed by "To the general public if someone does die on Monday as a result of this action the blame will be seen to be with the ambulancemen".

In the rest of the interview the answers all referred to the deterioration of the ambulance service and the connection between poor pay and lack of adequate facilities but the questions were always on the possibility of deaths occurring as a result of the strike.

BBC1 *Nationwide* on January 29 1979 provided a classic instance of the odds being stacked against the union representatives. The item was introduced with the words "Tonight the hospital where potential suicides have to be sent home because of union militants". In the studio were interviewer John Stapleton, Mr Albert Spanswick, General Secretary of COHSE, and Dr Pippard of Claybury Hospital in North East London. Mr Spanswick was asked "What is the world coming to when potential suicide cases are refused admission to hospital?". His reply was interrupted by John Stapleton twice, once with the words "callous and inhumane" and later "the fact is in the eyes of many people such action is unforgiveable". When Mr Spanswick pointed out, in response to Dr Pippard's criticisms, that Dr Pippard himself had joined other staff in banning all admissions to the hospital the previous year, the doctor was asked to explain this, and when he said on that occasion he thought the decision was justified but had since changed his mind and that banning admissions was "very evil means", Mr Stapleton took the opportunity to turn back to Mr Spanswick and repeat "very evil means". Mr Stapleton's views became more apparent when referring to the right of hospital workers to strike he said to Dr Pippard "Everyone else seems to strike at the moment — why shouldn't they?". It eventually emerged that the hospital concerned was 150 staff short and that the maximum they had been offered was twenty but by that time the interview was cut short for an item on disco dancing.

Phone-Ins

Another technique developed in broadcasting — particularly local radio — is the phone-in. This appears to allow the spontaneous expression of views of the public direct to the audience. However, all stations employ their own vetting procedures. Ostensibly these are to prevent the use of foul language or offensive material being broadcast. However, they can be used for editorial purposes to allow those views which the producer wants to be heard to be given greatest prominence.

Producers and presenters have acknowledged that maintaining balance in a phone-in programme is no easy task. Calls tend to come from those people who hold particularly strong views and these tend to be extreme views. In order to achieve a balance the presenter has to attempt to put those views not represented by callers.

Editing

Pre-recording also allows radio and television to reduce material to the time slot available. Thus while a person might be heard, and even seen, to express certain views these need no more represent their complete considered opinion than the two or three line quote used, not necessarily in context, in newspapers.

This applies not only to interviews but also to filmed material in general. Several hours of film can go into just a couple of minutes shown on television.

Those two minutes will not be the most representative but designed to show highlights. Where the cuts are made will be decided on one person's editorial judgement. But at some point editorial judgement becomes bias. Editing is very heavy in news and current affairs programmes but since this happens before the material is seen by the viewer it is an area in which it is difficult to give examples and one in which the degree to which editorial control is misused is impossible to estimate accurately.

Reluctance to Appear on Television or Radio

Whilst some union officials turned down the chance to appear on radio or television, a large number did take the opportunity and though on occasions those who appeared might not necessarily have been those best able to put over the trade union case, there is no reason to believe that if more officials had made themselves available for television interviews this would have improved the presentation of the trade union cause.

NUGMW case

The National Union of General and Municipal Workers raised a complaint concerning the BBC Radio 4 programme the *World at One* broadcast February 2. In this programme there was a detailed discussion about the Tameside gravediggers and their strike action, which was, the NUGMW says "reasonably correct". At the end of the programme the announcer made the following comment: "We will no doubt be returning to the question of striking gravediggers in Manchester on *PM*". Mr A Platt, the Regional Organiser of the NUGMW, telephoned the BBC pointing out that the Manchester gravediggers were not, nor had been on strike, that he and other officials were under tremendous pressure to allow the gravediggers in the North West to strike, which they were attempting to prevent, and that incorrect comments only made the position worse. The BBC apologised to Mr Platt and promised to put a statement on the *PM* programme. This was not done. The same evening there were renewed demands for strike action in Manchester, other parts of Tameside and Oldham.

OTHER ASPECTS OF BIAS

Harassment

One criticism of the media which is sometimes made is that of harassment of people from whom information is being sought. There is no evidence that in this respect during this period union officials were treated more harshly by the media than other people, who for various reasons have come into the public eye. However, on occasions senior union leaders have found several reporters and photographers 'camped out' outside their homes. And it is interesting to note that in all the controversy over picketing there was no mention of picketing of people's homes — which is in fact illegal — while the media were allowed to do just this. Indirectly, stories about union officials have led to offensive telephone calls and letters. Indeed, one official of COHSE in the North East complained publicly that he had been receiving offensive telephone calls concerning the action of NUPE members in Liverpool.

Photographs

The use of a photograph unrelated to a story has already been noted in the case of the TGWU and the *News of the World*. This appears to be a comparatively rare complaint. More of a problem is photographing of people who do not wish to be photographed. However, this like other forms of harassment by the media is unlikely to be more of a problem for trade unionists than other people in the news.

Anti-Union Asides

In an atmosphere where anti-union bias is the norm, anti-union asides slip over into other sections of the media. In the sports pages of the *Daily Express* for instance, on January 26, a story about Luther Blissett the Watford footballer picked to play for an England team read: "Forget the weather, the unions and the politicians and smile along with England's happiest striker". Earlier, on January 12, the same paper in a cartoon after England had won the Ashes had an Australian telling an England cricketer: "Tell your PM he's lucky, we have a real crisis in Australia". And in broadcasting — introducing an item on *Nationwide* about a lifeboatman Sue Lawley said: "Now let's turn to a man who wouldn't dream of going on strike."

CONCLUSION

The media's methods of covering industrial disputes did not suddenly change during the first two months of 1979. The techniques have been well developed over the years. Illustrations of the type given above could certainly have been picked from media coverage of industrial affairs at any time over the last ten or twenty years. What made this period different was that because of the extent of the disputes and the areas in which they occurred — areas in which the media has traditionally taken greatest interest in trade union affairs — coverage was more intense.

The intensity of coverage in turn produced far more examples of the ways bias manifests itself than would be normally expected during such a short period. This was a significant factor in producing anti-union opinions in the public generally as demonstrated by the opinion polls. Whether this caused any permanent damage to the public's opinion of trade unions is something which remains to be seen.

What is clear is that the public in general, and trade unionists in particular, must be made conscious of the ways in which anti-trade union bias manifests itself and must encourage others to treat media coverage of trade union affairs more sceptically. If this booklet has helped that process then it has served its purpose.

But scepticism in itself is not enough. On occasions it is useful and indeed necessary not to ignore the media when bias has been demonstrated but to complain loudly and vigorously. Equally, of course, it might also be useful to praise fair treatment and sympathetic coverage. For these reasons, the following list of addresses to which comments might usefully be directed has been compiled.

ADDRESSES

Broadcasting

BBC National Television and Radio

BBC Television, Television Centre, Wood Lane
London W12 — Tel: 01-743 8000

BBC Radio (Radios 1,2,3,& 4) Broadcasting House,
Portland Place, London W1A 1AA — Tel: 01-580 4468

Regional television news (usually broadcast as part of the *Nationwide* programme) is broadcast from regional centres. Their addresses are:

<i>East</i>	St Catherine's Close All Saints Green Norwich NR1 3ND Tel: 0603 28841
<i>Midlands</i>	Broadcasting Centre Pebble Mill Road Birmingham B5 7QQ Tel: 021-472 5353
<i>North</i>	Broadcasting Centre Woodhouse Lane Leeds LS2 9PX Tel: 0532 41181/8
<i>North-East</i>	Broadcasting House 54 New Bridge Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8AA Tel: 0632 20961
<i>North-West</i>	New Broadcasting House Oxford Road Manchester M60 1SJ Tel: 061-236 8444

<i>Scotland</i>	Broadcasting House Queen Margaret Drive Glasgow G12 8DG 041-339 8844
<i>South</i>	South Western House Canute Road Southampton SO9 1PF Tel: 0703 26201
<i>South-West</i>	Broadcasting House Seymour Road Mannamead Plymouth P13 5BD Tel: 0752 62283
<i>West</i>	Broadcasting House 21-33b Whiteladies Road Clifton Bristol BS8 2LR Tel: 0272 32211

BBC Local Radio

BBC Radio <i>Birmingham</i>	Pebble Mill Road Birmingham B5 7SA Tel: 021-472 5141
BBC Radio <i>Blackburn</i>	King Street Blackburn Lancs BB2 2EA Tel: 0254 62411

BBC Radio <i>Brighton</i>	Marlborough Place Brighton Sussex BN1 1TU Tel: 0273 680231
BBC Radio <i>Bristol</i>	3 Tyndalls Park Road Bristol BS8 1PP Tel: 0272 311111

BBC Radio Carlisle Hilltop Heights
London Road
Carlisle
Cumbria CA1 2NA
Tel: 0228 31661

BBC Radio Cleveland 91/93 Linthorpe Road
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS1 5DG
Tel: 0642 48491

BBC Radio Derby 56 St Helens Street
Derby DE1 3HY
Tel: 0332 361111

BBC Radio Dundee 12/13 Dock Street
Dundee
Tel: 0382 24938

BBC Radio Highland 7 Culduthel Road
Inverness IV2 4AD
Tel: 0463 221711

BBC Radio Humberside 9 Chapel Street
Hull HU1 3NU
Tel: 0482 23232

BBC Radio Leeds Merrion Centre
Leeds LS2 8NJ
Tel: 0532 42131

BBC Radio Leicester Epic House
Charles Street
Leicester LE1 3SH
Tel: 0533 27113

BBC Radio London 35A Marylebone High Street,
London W1A 4LG
Tel: 01-486 7611

BBC Radio Manchester PO Box 90
NBH
Oxford Road
Manchester M60 1SJ
Tel: 061-228 3434

BBC Radio Medway 30 High Street
Chatham
Kent ME4 4EZ
Tel: 0634 46284

BBC Radio Merseyside Commerce House
13/17 Sir Thomas Street
Liverpool L15 8S
Tel: 051-236 3355

BBC Radio Newcastle Crestina House
Archbold Terrace
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE2 1DZ
Tel: 0632 814243

BBC Radio Nottingham York House
York Street
Nottingham NG1 3JB
Tel: 0602 47643

BBC Radio Orkney Castle Street,
Kirkwall
Tel: 0856 3939

BBC Radio Oxford 242/254 Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 7DW
Tel: 0865 53411

BBC Radio Sheffield Ashdell Grove
60 Westbourne Road
Sheffield S10 2QU
Tel: 0742 686185

BBC Radio Shetland Brentham House,
Lerwick, Shetland
Tel: 0595 4747

BBC Radio Solent South Western House
Canute Road
Southampton SO9 4PJ
Tel: 0703 31311

BBC Radio Stoke-on-Trent Conway House
Cheapside
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffs ST1 1JJ
Tel: 0782 24827

If you do not receive satisfaction from a complaint direct to the programme or station responsible you can appeal to the BBC Programme Complaints Commission, 31 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BU. Tel: 01-839 3894.

Independent Television

ITN is the main independent television news company which is responsible for lunchtime, early evening and ten o'clock news programmes — their address is ITN House, 48 Wells Street, London W1P 4DE. Tel: 01-637 2424.

Individual programme companies produce their own local news programmes — like the BBC these are usually broadcast at 6 pm after the early evening news.

The commercial companies also broadcast current affairs programmes. Many of these are broadcast throughout the country. For instance, *World in Action* is produced by Granada, which is based in Manchester, but is seen almost everywhere.

The best way to tell which company has produced a particular programme is to note the name of the company which appears immediately before and after the programme. Alternatively look in the *TV Times* where the name appears after the listing of the programme.

The names and addresses of the television companies are as follows:

Anglia Television	Anglia House Norwich NR1 3JG Tel: 0603 28366	Scottish Television	Cowcaddens Glasgow G2 3PR Tel: 041-332 9999
ATV Network	ATV Centre Birmingham B1 2JP Tel: 021-643 9898	Southern Television	Southern Television Centre Northam Southampton SO9 4YQ Tel: 0703 28582
Border Television	Television Centre Carlisle CA1 3NT Tel: 0228 25101	Thames Television	Thames Television House 306-316 Euston Road London NW1 3BB Tel: 01-387 9494
Channel Television	The Television Centre St. Helier Jersey Channel Islands Tel: 0543 73999	Tyne Tees Television	The Television Centre City Road Newcastle-upon-tyne NE1 2AL Tel: 0632 610181
Grampian Television	Queen's Cross Aberdeen AB9 2XJ Tel: 0224 53553	Ulster Television	Havelock House Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 1EB Tel: 0232 28122
Granada Television	Granada TV Centre Manchester M60 9EA Tel: 061-832 7211	Westward Television	Derry's Cross Plymouth PL1 2SP Tel: 0752 69311
HTV	HTV Wales Television Centre Cardiff CF1 9XL Tel: 0222 21021	Yorkshire Television	The Television Centre Leeds LS2 1JS Tel: 0532 38283
London Weekend Television	South Bank Television Centre Kent House Upper Ground London SE1 9LT Tel: 01-261 3434		

Independent Radio

In commercial radio the national news programmes are produced by IRN (Independent Radio News), Gough Square, London EC4P 3LP. Tel: 01-353 1010. Local news is produced by the local companies:

ILR Belfast	Downtown Radio Kiltonga Radio Centre PO Box 293 Newtownards Co Down Northern Ireland Tel: 0247 815555	ILR London	(News and Information Service) · London Broadcasting Company Gough Square London EC4P 4LP Tel: 01-353 1010
ILR Birmingham	BRMB Radio Radio House PO Box 555 Birmingham B6 4BX Tel: 021-359 4481/9	ILR Manchester	Piccadilly Radio 127/131 The Piazza Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4AW Tel: 061-236 9913
ILR Bradford	Pennine Radio PO Box 235 Pennine House Forster Square Bradford BD1 5NP Tel: 0274 31521	ILR Nottingham	Radio Trent 29-31 Castle Gate Nottingham Tel: 0602 581731
ILR Edinburgh	Radio Forth Forth House Forth Street Edinburgh EH1 3LF Tel: 031-556 9255	ILR Plymouth	Plymouth Sound Earls Acre Alma Road Plymouth PL3 4HX Tel: 0752 27272
ILR Glasgow	Radio Clyde Ranken House Blythswood Court Anderston Cross Centre Glasgow G2 7LB Tel: 041-204 2555	ILR Portsmouth	Radio Victory PO Box 257 Portsmouth PO1 5RT Tel: 0705 27799
ILR Ipswich	Radio Orwell Electric House Lloyds Avenue Ipswich IP1 3HZ Tel: 0473 216971	ILR Reading	Thames Valley Broadcasting PO Box 210 Reading Berkshire RG3 5RZ Tel: 0734 413131
ILR Liverpool	Radio City PO Box 194 8-10 Stanley Street Liverpool L69 1LD Tel: 051-227 5100	ILR Sheffield and Rotherham	Radio Hallam PO Box 194 Hartshead Sheffield S1 1GP Tel: 0742 71188
ILR London	(General and Entertainment Service) Capital Radio Euston Tower London NW1 3DR Tel: 01-388 1288	ILR Swansea	Swansea Sound Victoria Road Gowerton Swansea SA4 3AB Tel: 0792 893751
		ILR Radio Tees	Radio Tees 74 Dovecot Street Stockton-on-Tees Cleveland TS 18 1IL Tel: 0642 61511

ILR
Tyne/Wear Metro Radio
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE99 1BB
Tel: 0632 884121

ILR
Wolverhampton/Black
Country Beacon Radio
PO Box 303
Wolverhampton WV6 0DQ
Tel: 0902 757211

As with the BBC, complaints or comments should initially be addressed to the programme or station concerned. The Independent Broadcasting Authority has a Complaints Review Board which examines the way companies have handled complaints. The IBA address is 70 Brompton Road, London SW3. Tel: 01-584 7011.

Newspapers

Newspapers publish their addresses in each copy of the paper, usually at the foot of the back page, or sometimes with the editorial column. If you cannot find the address of the paper you want, consult *Willings Press Guide*, which you will find in most public libraries. Names and addresses of the main national papers are:

Dailies

Daily Express Fleet Street,
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 8000

Daily Mail Northcliffe House,
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 6000

Daily Star Great Ancoats Street
Manchester M60 4HB
Tel: 061-236 2112

Daily Mirror Holborn Circus,
London WC1
Tel: 01-353 0246

Daily Telegraph 135 Fleet Street
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 4242

Financial Times Bracken House
Cannon Street
London EC4
Tel: 01-248 8000

Guardian 119 Farringdon Road
London EC1
Tel: 01-278 2332

Morning Star 75 Farringdon Road,
London EC4
Tel: 01-405 9242

Sun 30 Bouverie Street
London WC1
Tel: 01-353 3030

The Times 200 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1
Tel: 01-837 1234

Sundays

News of the World 30 Bouverie Street
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 3030

Observer 8 St Andrews Hill
London EC4
Tel: 01-236 0202

Sunday Express Fleet Street
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 8000

Sunday Mirror Holborn Circus
London EC1
Tel: 01-353 0246

Sunday People 9 New Fetter Lane
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 0246

Sunday Telegraph 135 Fleet Street
London EC4
Tel: 01-353 4242

Sunday Times 200 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1
Tel: 01-837 1234

Complaints about the actions of any newspaper, local or national can be taken up with the Press Council, whose address is, 1 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE.

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